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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001704

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, S/E WILLIAMSON, AF/SPG
NSC FOR HUDSON AND PITTMAN
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AF/SUDAN
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/20/2013

TAGS: PREL PGOV KPKO AU UNSC SU QA

SUBJECT: PCP LEADER TURABI SAYS SUDAN REQUIRES A NATIONAL APPROACH TO RESOLVE NATIONAL PROBLEMS

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Popular Congress Party (PCP) leader Hassan Turabi dismissed the Sudan People's Initiative (SPI) as lacking any real substance. Turabi argued that Darfur can only be resolved by a truly national forum in which all parties are equally represented and that addresses national issues holistically, but that SPI is being manipulated by the NCP. Turabi urged that the United States treat Sudan's problems as part of a whole, rather than try to deal with each in isolation. End summary.

U.S. Needs to Focus on the Whole, Not the Parts

¶2. (C) On November 20, CDA Fernandez met with PCP leader Hassan Turabi and PCP Foreign Relations Secretary Bashir Adam Rahma at Turabi's home. Turabi urged the U.S. not to focus solely on one aspect of the Sudan situation (e.g., CPA implementation, elections, Darfur) to the exclusion of the others. The CDA agreed, saying that that all of the parts need to move together. For example, the 2009 national elections are not just a north-south CPA issue but a national challenge. If the elections fail in Darfur, they will fail nationally. Turabi went on to argue that Sudan needs a truly federal system. A centralized state cannot be a democracy, he said. He is concerned that the NCP will make a political deal with the SPLM to share the spoils and ignore Darfur. "Without Darfur, it is hard for the NCP to retain power in the North."

SPI a Shadow of What is Required

¶3. (C) CDA asked Turabi for his sense of the SPI session in Kenana. Turabi was dismissive of SPI, arguing that while resolving the Darfur conflict requires a truly national forum, the National Congress Party (NCP) is stage managing the SPI for its own interests. For example, he said that the tribal leaders supposed to represent the people of Darfur at the SPI had been hand-picked by the NCP. 70 percent of the participants were from the NCP, and the remaining 30 percent ranged from mild to moderate critics of the regime. Turabi said that all of Sudan's opposition parties have been seeking a joint initiative on Darfur, but that President Bashir had been uninterested before July 14 (the date on which ICC prosecutor Ocampo requested an arrest warrant against Bashir.) Turabi argued that in a truly national forum, all parties would be represented equally, with the forum presidency rotating among them. They would jointly identify and prioritize the key issues. As it is, the NCP alone controls all the working committees in the SPI and determines the results.

¶4. (C) Turabi continued that, although others can help, only

the Sudanese themselves can settle their own problems. He observed that the Qataris, who will host the next session in Doha, are woefully uninformed about the issues involved in the conflict, and that they need to educate themselves. Their role will be limited to hosting and paying for the Doha meeting. They do have the advantage of being viewed as relatively neutral, unlike the Arab League, which has lost all credibility in the eyes of the Darfur rebels, according to Turabi.

¶15. (C) CDA Fernandez wondered whether the Doha conference actually would take place. Turabi said that the Qataris, need to approach Abdul Wahid Nur, as well as the Justice and Equality Movement, to bring them into the process. The real work needs to be accomplished before the conference begins, he observed. The Qataris mean well, and are willing to throw money at the problem, but they are naive about Darfur, and will be tempted to focus on the conference itself rather than the real work of peace-making, opined Turabi.

Who,s Fooling Who?

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¶16. (C) Turabi dismissed President Bashir,s announcement at the conclusion of the Kenana session as the government,s &20th cease-fire declaration.⁸ CDA Fernandez noted that Bashir declared that the cease-fire was to be &immediate and unconditional,⁸ but that other NCP officials had immediately begun adding caveats. He wondered, was Bashir misleading his audience, or was Bashir being misled by those around him? Turabi added that it was only shortly after his cease-fire announcement, that Bashir had belligerently declared that the Western powers and the ICC were &under his feet.⁸

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¶17. (C) The Charge remarked that Bashir,s concluding SPI address seemed disconnected from reality. Turabi agreed and said that others at the conference felt the same. He said that officials in the Umma Party had told him they were &disappointed.⁸ Umma's participation in the SPI is threatening to split the party and Sadiq al-Mahdi (who is also Turabi's brother in law) is ready to bolt from the initiative. Turabi again dismissed the entire SPI exercise as lacking any real substance, saying that the government failed to offer the people of Darfur anything of real consequence. The NCP had attempted to woo Turabi's own PCP into the SPI process but in the end, Turabi decided that more could be gained by staying out - he feels vindicated by the results to date.

Comment

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¶18. (C) Turabi is correct about at least one thing: Sudan,s various issues (CPA, elections, Darfur) are all of a piece and cannot be resolved in isolation. All are symptoms, rather than the underlying malady, that resides in Khartoum. Without a comprehensive and coordinated approach to treating the illness at the Center, these symptoms will continue to fester.

FERNANDEZ